

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 577
By Head

A RESOLUTION to honor and applaud Coach Susie Gardner and the Austin Peay State University Women's Basketball Team on winning the 2002-2003 Ohio Valley Conference Regular Season Championship and the 2003 OVC Conference Tournament.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly is pleased to specially honor and commend those successful sports teams that, through their magnificent exploits, bring honor to Tennessee and serve as exceptional ambassadors of this State; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Peay State University women's basketball program is renowned for its perennial nature as a bastion of extraordinary athletic facility and competitive stature in the world of college athletics; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Governors of Austin Peay State University achieved an extraordinary level of success during the 2002-2003 season, establishing an overall record of 27-3 on the way to claiming both the regular-season Championship of the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) and the Ohio Valley Conference Tournament Championship; and

WHEREAS, by virtue of winning the Conference's Regular Season Championship, the Governors earned the number one seed in the OVC Tournament; the team notched an 85-61 win over a solid Southeast Missouri State team to claim Austin Peay's fourth overall and third consecutive conference tournament title and a berth in the NCAA Tournament for the third consecutive year; and

WHEREAS, while supporting the team's vision, several players were awarded accolades for their brilliant individual performances: Brooke Armistead, Gerlonda Hardin, and Paige Smith were named to the All-Tournament Team; Ashley Haynes and Kera Bergeron were named to the OVC All-Freshmen Team; and Brooke Armistead was named both the Most Valuable Player for the Tournament and OVC Player of the Year; and

WHEREAS, pitted against the number three seed, the University of North Carolina, in the first round of the NCAA Tournament, the record-setting team from Clarksville valiantly fought for the right to advance to the next round, but time expired before they could reclaim the lead; and

WHEREAS, the most celebrated women's basketball team in the Austin Peay's history, the 2002-2003 Lady Governors have left their mark on the record books; they are tied with Liberty University for the nation's second-longest winning streak, at 22 wins, a streak that also sets the OVC record for consecutive wins; and

WHEREAS, going undefeated at home, the team set the school record for consecutive wins at home at 12; and

WHEREAS, Austin Peay's women also went undefeated in conference play during the 2002-2003 season, the first team to do so in the new 16-game format; their 16 conference wins also places them in a tie with two other schools for the most conference wins in a season; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Peay State University women's basketball team includes the following outstanding players: Cassandra Peek, Brooke Armistead, Paige Smith, Kera Bergeron, Carden Cobb, Missy Booker, Christian Stefanopoulos, Alicia Watson, Barb

Schlarmann, Jessica Grayson, Ashley Haynes, Leah Frierson, and Gerlonda Hardin, each of whom contributed significantly to the team's success; and

WHEREAS, awarded OVC Coach of the Year honors, Head Coach Susie Gardner has devoted seven remarkable years to the cultivation of the women's basketball program at Austin Peay State University and laid the groundwork for three consecutive championship seasons by sharing with the young women on the team her substantial knowledge of basketball, her many years of coaching and athletic experience, and her passion both for the sport of basketball and for excellence in every endeavor; and

WHEREAS, the basketball players at Austin Peay State University epitomize all that is good in today's student-athlete, as they have achieved a premier level of success in competition, while showing the highest degree of character both on and off the court; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Governors have inspired the Austin Peay student body and excited basketball fans throughout Tennessee and the nation in completing their triumphal run through the 2002-2003 season; and

WHEREAS, the perseverance, determination, work ethic, and talent of this group of young women not only made possible a championship basketball season, but also surely bode well for their success in every future enterprise; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to acknowledge and applaud the Austin Peay State University Lady Governors for winning the 2002-2003 Ohio Valley Conference Championship and the 2003 OVC Conference Tournament and for serving as examples of the exceptional quality of Tennessee's student-athletes; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we do hereby honor and congratulate Coach Susie Gardner and the Austin Peay State University Lady Governors on their formidable legacy, their individual and collective resolve, and their extraordinary championship season.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.